

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OIL PRODUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, everybody in America is concerned about gas and oil prices. We all remember the long gas lines during the Carter administration, and the government made a commitment that we would be independent as far as energy needs were concerned at some point in the not too distant future, and we were supposed to work toward that end. I would like to give a report on where we stand because the American people are very, very concerned about high gas prices right now and the lack of oil.

On May 29, the United States consumed as much oil as it will produce domestically all year. All the oil that we produce in the United States has been used up by May 29. That means from that date until January, 2008, next year, we are now completely dependent upon politically unstable regions of the world such as the Persian Gulf, Nigeria, and Venezuela for our energy needs. Why is that? Because year after year, decade after decade, this country throws up more roadblocks, usually because of some environmental reason, to exploring for and utilizing domestic supplies of oil and natural gas.

In the ANWR, for instance, it holds the single largest deposit of oil in the entire United States, and that is 10.4 billion barrels of oil, and it is more than double the proven reserves in the entire State of Texas, and almost half of the total proven reserves in the United States, which is 22 billion barrels.

To put it more simply, opening the ANWR could increase U.S. reserves by nearly 50 percent.

And I have been up to the ANWR, and I can tell you there is no environmental damage that is going to take place if we drill in that area. And we could get between 1½ to 2 million barrels of oil a day. That would help a tremendous

amount the needs of the American people.

On the outer continental shelf, another example, as required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Department of the Interior recently conducted a comprehensive inventory of oil and natural gas resources located off of our coastlines. According to the Department of the Interior, there is an estimated 8.5 billion barrels of known oil reserves and 29.3 trillion cubic feet of known natural gas reserves along our coastlines; with 82 percent of the oil and 95 percent of the gas located in the Gulf of Mexico.

However, even more importantly, the Department of the Interior estimates there are untapped resources of about 86 billion barrels, 51 percent in the Gulf of Mexico; and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 55 percent in the Gulf of Mexico, that is out there.

In July, 2004, a Spanish oil company, Repsol-YPF, in partnership with communist Cuba's state oil company, CUPET, identified five oil fields it classified as "high quality" in the deep water of the Florida Straits right off the coast of Florida, 20 miles northeast of Havana and within Cuba's Exclusive Economic Zone.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the North Cuba Basin holds an estimated 4.6 billion to 9.3 billion barrels of crude oil and 9.8 trillion to 21.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Unfortunately, since the 1980s, the U.S. has prohibited oil and gas drilling on most of the outer continental shelf except for limited areas of the western Gulf of Mexico, not the Florida Straits or around Florida, and limited parts of Alaska.

Oil shale: There is enough oil shale in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming to create the equivalent of 1.8 trillion barrels of oil and potentially as much as 8 trillion barrels of oil. In comparison, Saudi Arabia reportedly holds proven reserves of 267 billion barrels, which is less than about one-eighth of what we have in the United States in shale.

Unfortunately, oil shale is roughly equivalent to diesel fuel and a number of Clean Air Act regulations, such as low-sulphur diesel, and Federal motor fuel taxes, which favor gasoline over diesel fuels, have created a strong financial disincentive regarding the production and use of oil shale fuels.

I don't want to belabor this point, but we have enough oil that we could move very closely to energy independence if we didn't have environmental radicals stopping us from drilling where we have the oil and we have those known oil reserves.

It is tragic that we have to continue to rely on Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and other countries that are very unstable in various parts of the world when we really know that at some point in the future we are going to need more and more of their oil.

We need to move toward energy independence. We have been talking about it since the 1980s. Nothing has been

done, and now gas prices are going up because we aren't producing enough oil and gas in the United States. And we have the reserves there to do it. We haven't even built any new oil refineries for 30 years. We can't even refine the oil that we do get here in the United States to take care of all the needs of the American people.

So I would just like to say to my colleagues, as I close, on both sides of the aisle, that we need to start moving toward energy independence. We need to start thinking about economic concerns as well as environmental concerns and have a balance there. We can do it in an environmentally safe way, and the American people want us to do it, and we need to listen to them as well as the environment lobby here in Congress.

END THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of the war, which is now an occupation, in Iraq, the Bush administration has not kept faith with our troops. Whether it was sending them into combat without the proper body armor or failing to provide wounded veterans with proper care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, this administration has turned its back on our brave men and women time and time again.

Another example of this outrageous mistreatment is the Pentagon's "stop loss" policy. A very disturbing article about "stop loss" appeared 3 days ago in the Chicago Tribune. Actually, it should be required reading for every single Member of this House. The article says:

"As the United States moves into its 5th year in Iraq and escalates troop levels there, the Pentagon has kept combat units manned by forcing as many as 80,000 soldiers to stay in uniform in war zones even after their enlistment obligations have been met or their retirement dates have passed.

"The policy, known as "stop loss" . . . has sparked . . . a spate of lawsuits and in backlash in the ranks.

" . . . The vast majority of troops find that stop loss means one thing: Instead of beginning new lives in the civilian world, they are headed back to Iraq for their second, third, or even fourth combat tour, a practice critics say amounts to nothing less than an involuntary draft.

" . . . Suzanne Miller, a Jacksonville lawyer whose son expects to be stop-lossed this summer, said, 'I like . . . to call it indentured servitude . . . you have no control over your own destiny and are being forced, under threat of prison, to work for an employer you no longer want to work for.'"

Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop mistreating our troops and the families who wait so patiently for their return.